

Fiscal Highlights

Corrections Substance Abuse Treatment - Gary R. Syphus

You may have already assumed that substance abuse treatment for inmates was beneficial; but, what is the most effective way to disburse substance abuse treatment resources? The Washington State Institute for Public Policy performed a study that looked at the effectiveness of programming of offenders that included various substance abuse treatment programs and included a cost-benefit analysis.

Reducing Crime With Evidence-Based Options: What Works, and Benefits & Costs					
Washington State Institute for Public Policy Estimates as of October, 2006	Effect on Crime Outcomes Percent change in crime outcomes, & the number of evidence-based studies on which the estimate is based (in parentheses) (1)	Benefits and Costs (Per Participant, Net Present Value, 2006 Dollars)			
		Benefits to Crime Victims (of the reduction in crime) (2)	Benefits to Taxpayers (of the reduction in crime) (3)	Costs (marginal program cost, compared to the cost of alternative) (4)	Benefits (total) Minus Costs (per participant) (5)
Notes: "n/e" means not estimated at this time. Prevention program costs are partial program costs, pro-rated to match crime outcomes.					
Programs for People in the Adult Offender System					
Vocational education in prison	-9.0% (4)	\$8,114	\$6,806	\$1,182	\$13,738
Intensive supervision: treatment-oriented programs	-16.7% (11)	\$9,318	\$9,369	\$7,124	\$11,563
General education in prison (basic education or post-secondary)	-7.0% (17)	\$6,325	\$5,306	\$962	\$10,669
Cognitive-behavioral therapy in prison or community	-6.3% (25)	\$5,658	\$4,746	\$105	\$10,299
Drug treatment in community	-9.3% (6)	\$5,133	\$5,495	\$574	\$10,054
Correctional industries in prison	-5.9% (4)	\$5,360	\$4,496	\$417	\$9,439
Drug treatment in prison (therapeutic communities or outpatient)	-5.7% (20)	\$5,133	\$4,306	\$1,604	\$7,835
Adult drug courts	-8.0% (57)	\$4,395	\$4,705	\$4,333	\$4,767
Employment and job training in the community	-4.3% (16)	\$2,373	\$2,386	\$400	\$4,359
Electronic monitoring to offset jail time	0% (9)	\$0	\$0	-\$870	\$870
Sex offender treatment in prison with aftercare	-7.0% (6)	\$6,442	\$2,885	\$12,585	-\$3,258
Intensive supervision: surveillance-oriented programs	0% (23)	\$0	\$0	\$3,747	-\$3,747
Washington's Dangerously Mentally Ill Offender program	-20.0% (1)	\$18,020	\$15,116	n/e	n/e
Drug treatment in jail	-4.5% (9)	\$2,481	\$2,656	n/e	n/e
Adult boot camps	0% (22)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
Domestic violence education/cognitive-behavioral treatment	0% (9)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
Jail diversion for mentally ill offenders	0% (11)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e
Life Skills education programs for adults	0% (4)	\$0	\$0	n/e	n/e

During the 2013 General Session, the Legislature internally adjusted about \$2.2 million from the for substance abuse treatment within the Department of Corrections (DOC). This amounts to a total of about \$8.7 million dedicated toward treatment for specific inmates linked to a form substance abuse. Beyond this there is about \$900,000 given to the Department of Corrections for their supervision role in the Drug Offender Reform Act (DORA).

One of the big takeaways from the report on the effectiveness of the DORA program was:

"Statewide DORA participants were compared to a matched group to examine the impact of DORA on criminal justice outcomes. **Results of the post-exit recidivism analyses suggested that DORA participants' outcomes were not significantly different from those of the Matched Comparison group. The findings show that, after controlling for covariates, DORA did not have a significant impact on participants when compared to similar offenders on traditional probation and parole.** . . . As currently implemented, DORA may not have sufficient intensity or breadth of treatment targets to adequately address the dynamic needs of the high risk population it serves. DORA's exclusive focus on substance abuse, to the exclusion of other criminogenic risk factors, may be insufficient to reduce recidivism among a high-need group of offenders."

As more than 90% of all inmates will eventually be released from prison and into communities, part of DOC's responsibilities are "providing maximum opportunities for offenders to make lasting changes through accountability, treatment, education, and positive reinforcement within a safe environment." Research shows that substance abuse treatment contributes to positive outcomes in improved recidivism rates - or the rate at which they return to prison. This impacts the budget as the cost of inmates is about \$25,000-29,000/year. Much of the cause of recidivism is directly or indirectly related

to substance abuse problems. If treatment can help with the reasons inmates return to prison, this will likely have a positive impact on the budget as well as other socially desirable effects. Moving into the 2014 General Session, determining the right combination of substance abuse treatment programs and funding will be important.